

In brief...

Promoting sustainable tourism

VISITSCOTLAND has published its first sustainable tourism programme.

The strategy hopes to help businesses understand how sustainability can improve bottom line performance.

A series of seminars and workshops will be held around the country in the coming months in a bid to engage 1,000 companies.

Philip Riddle, chief executive of VisitScotland, said: "These workshops will help equip tourism businesses across the country with the information they need to minimise the impact of their activities on the environment and community, whilst securing economic growth."

A guide to support the initiative has been produced in partnership with the Forestry Commission Scotland, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and Cairngorms National Park, Scottish Enterprise, Keep Scotland Beautiful and Scottish Environment Link.

US appetite for craft beer

INNIS & Gunn has formed a new operational arm in America.

Dan DeLuca, previously with International Beverage Holdings, joins Innis and Gunn USA to distribute and market the beer brand. He said: "The respect Innis & Gunn has here amongst people who really know their craft beer is immense and the appetite for better and more interesting beer amongst US consumers is growing."

Dougal Sharp, founder of the company, said: "Gaining a strong foothold in the US is an integral part of our growth strategy as we look to write the next chapter in Innis & Gunn's success story."

"Dan's track record speaks for itself and we're thrilled to have him as part of the team. With the US growth plans, our ambition of making Innis & Gunn as synonymous with Scotland as any malt whisky brand comes one step closer."

Hitting £2m shows that Main has the mettle

Steel building company credits success to client-oriented service

By Greig Cameron

ASTEEL building company has hit a £2million turnover target less than two years after it was founded.

Main Design and Build creates bespoke industrial, office, leisure and agricultural structures.

Emma Stuart, managing director, started the Perthshire business a few months after her parents sold their construction company.

She said: "Our first building went in the ground at the end of May 2008, so we haven't done two full years of trading yet. But our financial year runs to December and we hit the £2m target we set ourselves."

"I had the opportunity to go in any direction and realised my love and passion is steel-framed buildings."

"It is a huge capital expenditure so it would be foolish not to consider the longer term. We are very client-driven and want to understand our client's business. We don't just want to sell them a shed."

With its own workshop facilities, architects and tradesmen, the business is able to adapt quickly to customers' needs.

At the moment, she is interviewing to increase staff numbers by two and take the total number of employees to 18. Stuart said: "Service is key. The

ability to give the client what they need and tailor it to them will give us a competitive edge."

"Having our own workshop is vital. The difference between having bought someone else's fabricated steelwork to having total control and doing it yourself is chalk and cheese."

At present, the business is working on projects ranging from agricultural buildings damaged by snow to an office and retail development.

While the bulk of sales are in Scotland, Stuart says attracting more revenues from England is a possibility.

She added: "We are beginning to find we are getting repeat and referral business."

"When people are going to spend a sum of money they want to have confidence in who they are spending it with."

"We have some strong customers and if they went south of the border, I would hope they would take us with them."



WIDER REACH : Emma Stuart, managing director of Main Design and Build, aims to attract business from England

David Cochrane – chief executive of HIT Scotland

My working week..

WHILE January can be a quiet time for some, it is the busiest time of the year for David Cochrane.

Sorting through hundreds of bursary and scholarship applications for the Hospitality Industry Trust Scotland is just part of it.

He said: "We have potentially 180 hours of interviews before we award our emerging talent scholarships at our annual conference in February. It's one of the most pleasant but daunting parts of my role."

"The applicants are motivating to talk to and each year it affirms my faith in the hospitality industry, but having to turn people away because they are not quite

ready can be difficult." Doing as many face-to-face interviews as possible, he goes around the country, whether it be in Gleneagles or to Crieff Hydro and to further education colleges.

Then there are meetings with professionals from hospitality schools and organisations around the world such as the Ecole du Hotelier in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Disney Institute in Florida or Cornell University in America.

Cochrane said: "We work with the industry and colleges to help raise the number of, and standard of, graduate entrants into the industry."

"This summer, for the first time, a select group of students is attending on a

bespoke professionally-orientated course at Lausanne."

Dealing with partners – including De Vere, Du Vin, Coca-Cola, Brakes Food Services, Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Unilever – and organising events such as the recent Emerging Talent conference in Perth also come under Cochrane's remit.

And next January he is taking on his greatest challenge – climbing Africa's highest peak Kilimanjaro – and has even persuaded his wife to take part.

He added: "Family life is important for me. I make sure I spend time with my two children and wife at home in Kinross. Although she doesn't work in the industry, my wife is a big supporter of HIT Scotland."

